

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application and for indicating that claims 23, 24, 26-30, 38, 39, and 41-45 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (see Office Action dated January 12, 2006, page 5).

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-45 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 16, and 31 are independent. The remaining claims depend either directly or indirectly from claims 1, 16, and 31. By way of this reply, dependent claims 7-8, 22-23, and 37-38 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1-6, 9-21, 24-36, and 39-45 remain pending.

Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 16, and 31 have been amended for clarity, to resolve antecedent basis issues, and to incorporate the limitations of dependent claims 7-8, 22-23, and 37-38, respectively. Claims 2-3, 17-18, and 32-33 have been amended for consistency with the terminology of the specification. Claims 4-5, 10, 19-20, 25, 34-35, and 40 have been amended to resolve antecedent basis issues. Claims 7-8, 22-23, and 37-38 have been cancelled by way of this reply, and their limitations added to claims 1, 16, and 31, respectively. Accordingly, claims 9, 24, and 39 have been amended to depend from amended claims 1, 16, and 31, respectively. Claims 11-15, 26-30, and 41-45 have been amended for clarity, to resolve antecedent basis issues, and for consistency with amended claims 1, 16, and 31, respectively.

No new matter is added by way of these amendments, as support may be found in the originally submitted claims and corresponding discussion in the specification.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-15 stand rejected under 35, U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, claim 1 stands rejected as being vague and indefinite because it is not clear whether claim 1 is directed to a method or a product, and claims 2-15 stand rejected as being dependent from rejected claim 1 (*see* Office Action dated January 12, 2006, page 2). By way of this reply, claim 1 has been amended to be more clearly directed to a method. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-7, 10, 16-22, 25, 31-37, and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by US006768988B2 ("Boreham"). Claims 7, 22, and 37 have been cancelled by way of this reply. Accordingly, the rejection is now moot with respect to claims 7, 22, and 37. To the extent that the rejection applies to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 23, 24, 26-30, 38, 39, and 41-45 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (*see* Office Action dated January 12, 2006, page 5). Claims 1, 16, and 31 have been amended to include substantially all of the same limitations as now-cancelled claims 23 and 38, which are indicated as having allowable subject matter. Accordingly, amended claims 1, 16, and 31 are allowable for at least the same reasons as now-cancelled claims 23 and 38. Claims 2-6, 10, 16-21, 25, 31-36, and 40 depend either directly or

indirectly from claims 1, 16, and 31, and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons.



Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 03226/500001).

Dated: April 12, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 
for Robert P. Lord  T. Chyan Liang
Registration No.: 46,479 #48,885
OSHA · LIANG LLP
1221 McKinney St., Suite 2800
Houston, Texas 77010
(713) 228-8600
(713) 228-8778 (Fax)
Attorney for Applicant